

To: Members of the Three-Tier Review Task Force

From: Katherine Uhlinger

Re: Tasks for 8/3/06 Meeting

Thank you for the opportunity to send information to the task force. I appreciate the work you are doing and the data you have made available regarding the task force context and goals.

I am a social worker currently working in a middle school/ high school setting. I am also a parent of 10 and 12-year-old children. When I consider the issues you are addressing, I view them from the perspectives of a Washington citizen, parent and social worker.

You specify ways in which the environment of the 21st century has changed. Despite financial gain seen by the state's tourism and economy from the beer and wine industry and despite educational gains regarding the negative impacts of alcohol, compelling facts and issues remain:

- *The on-going societal costs of alcohol use/abuse are well-documented. (1), (3)

- *"Alcohol is by far the most used and abused drug among America's teenagers." (3)

- *"Underage drinking and adult excessive drinking (the amount adult drink in excess of two drinks a day) accounts for 50.1 percent of the alcohol consumed in the U.S. and 49 percent of consumer expenditures for alcohol, according to an article in the February 26 issue of JAMA, the Journal of the American Medical Association" (1)

- *"Decreasing the number of alcohol outlets in a community is closely associated with reduction in rates of alcohol-related youth violence." (2), (6)

- *"Holding retailers liable for damage inflicted on others by intoxicated and underage patrons (asserting dram shop liability) promotes responsible server practices and reduces alcohol-related traffic crashes." (2)

- *In the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation 2001 Youth Access to Alcohol Survey, "81% of Americans polled supported higher alcohol taxes." (4)

- *A study released in 2002 noted: "With alcohol contributing to more than 40 percent of urban traffic fatalities, controlling access to alcohol, penalties for violations of liquor laws, stricter licensure requirements and random sobriety checkpoints are four of the most important ways by which states and cities might be able to lower alcohol related traffic deaths." (5)

- *Several reports cite the relationship between alcohol outlet density/location and alcohol related problems incurred by the community and larger society. (6)

As you approach your upcoming tasks of identifying and discussing potential improvement alternatives and deciding on priorities for further research/analysis, I strongly urge you to add the above information to your working frame of reference. The cited sources provide additional, related information.

I am proud to live in a state that has enacted such strong taxation on alcohol and tobacco. We need to maintain this health-promoting standard and also keep on the table other key issues such as keg registration, outlet density restrictions, maintaining strict licensing practices, dram shop liability, responsible beverage service and sales and advertising restrictions.

Thank you for your time and for your efforts to uphold the state's policy goals and improve the health of Washington's citizens.

Sincerely,
Katherine Uhlinger
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- (1) <http://alcoholism.about.com/library/nosearch/n030226.htm>
- (2) http://www.alcoholpolicymd.com/alcohol_policy/effects_ep.htm
- (3) http://www.alcoholpolicymd.com/alcohol_and_health/alcohol_and_youth.htm
- (4) <http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org/en/stats/community.cfm>
- (5) <http://www.rwjf.org/newsroom/newsreleasesdetail.jsp?id=10187&gsa=1&print=true>
- (6) <http://www.resources.prev.org/alcoholoutlet.htm>